



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

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TO: EACH SUPERVISOR

FROM: DARYL L. OSBY, FIRE CHIEF *Daryl L. Osby*

### U. S. FOREST SERVICE'S NEW DEFENSIBLE SPACE POLICY UPDATE

This communique serves as a follow-up to the Department's memo to your Honorable Board dated February 14, 2012, regarding the U.S. Government Accountability Office report titled, "Station Fire: Forest Service's Response Offers Potential Lessons for Future Wildland Fire Management." In addition, this memo provides information regarding reforestation efforts. The following update outlines the U.S. Forest Service's progress on implementation of a new Defensible Space Policy for the Angeles National Forest (ANF).

#### Defensible Space Requirements

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act, the ANF is preparing a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on proposed increase of defensible space adjacent to structures from 30 feet to 100 feet, and up to 200 feet in extra hazardous areas. Completion of the Defensible Space draft EA is pending. Once the Defensible Space Policy draft EA is released to the public there will be a 45-day comment period. Based on recommendations from the public, the ANF Supervisor will then issue a Final Decision Document. Adoption of the new Defensible Space Policy is expected by early 2013. This new Defensible Space Policy will be enforced around all privately owned and leased structures within and adjacent to the ANF.

In May of 2010, the ANF completed a separate EA that specifically addressed increasing the defensible space around all communication equipment and structures in the Mount Wilson area from 100 feet to 300 feet. Defensible space clearance in the Mount Wilson area is expected to take at least three to five years with clearance activities being

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BELLFLOWER  
BRADBURY

CALABASAS  
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CERRITOS  
CLAREMONT  
COMMERCE  
COVINA  
CUDAHY

DIAMOND BAR  
DUARTE  
EL MONTE  
GARDENA  
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HIDDEN HILLS  
HUNTINGTON PARK  
INDUSTRY  
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LA HABRA

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RANCHO PALOS VERDES  
ROLLING HILLS  
ROLLING HILLS ESTATES  
ROSEMEAD  
SAN DIMAS  
SANTA CLARITA

SIGNAL HILL  
SOUTH EL MONTE  
SOUTH GATE  
TEMPLE CITY  
WALNUT  
WEST HOLLYWOOD  
WESTLAKE VILLAGE  
WHITTIER

conducted by both our Department's camp crews and private vendors hired by the ANF. Since the beginning of 2012, our Department's camp crews have treated 13 acres. Additionally, the ANF awarded two (2) contracts to private vendors to treat 160 acres around the structures on federal land. Due to the presence of Spotted Owls, the ANF has stopped the work in the Mount Wilson area. The work will resume on August 15, 2012, at the end of the nesting season.

The ANF is in the process of securing additional funding to clear roadside hazardous brush along the Mount Disappointment and West Fork roads. All defensible space work in the Mount Wilson area is expected to be completed by 2015.

### **Reforestation Efforts**

Members of the Department's Forestry Division have been in contact with ANF Supervisor Tom Contreras and he expressed a great deal of interest in using the County's expertise to enhance future reforestation work. County Foresters will soon be meeting with Supervisor Contreras and other Forest Service experts to review methods, procedures, and practices that will enhance additional reforestation efforts.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (323) 881-6180, or have your staff contact Frank Vidales, Acting Chief, Forestry Division, at (323) 890-4330.

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